

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

March 27, 1997 LB 119

investigation of child abuse in these situations. "Out of home abuse or neglect" is defined as abuse or neglect occurring in day-care homes, foster homes, day-care centers, group homes, and other child-care facilities or institutions. The goal of the bill is to increase the parents' access to records and provide for a means of communication between the persons with custody of the alleged abused child and the agency investigating the possible abuse or neglect. The bill does, basically, three things. It would require that the person with custody of the child be notified immediately if a report is made that there has been an out-of-home abuse or neglect of that child. The person with custody would also be given information on the nature of the abuse and other information the department decides is necessary. However, the bill makes it clear that the person with custody would not have to be notified if that person is the alleged abuser. The bill would require that the law...that the law enforcement agencies or the department inform the person with custody of the child on the final determination at the end of any investigation involving the abuse or neglect. It would also allow the person with custody of the child to have access to the department's records regarding investigation of the report of abuse or neglect. The current statutes for handling child abuse reports and investigation seem to disregard the parents' access to this important information regarding their child. In situation where the parents is not the one suspected of the abuse, the parents are not required to be informed of the situation. Therefore, they may feel completely abandoned or left out of the loop of information. In some cases, they may not be informed of a report of child abuse which could cause their child to be left in a potentially dangerous situation. In conclusion, LB 119, as amended, would assist in allowing a person with custody of the child to have access to important basic information regarding the possible abuse or neglect. This bill simply allows a parent the right to be informed of what is happening with an extremely personal and traumatic issue involving their child. Thank you very much for listening to the introduction, and hopefully you will pass the bill as amended.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Wesely, to open on the committee amendments. (AM0630 appears on page 923 of the Legislative Journal.)